

TIME FOR A NEW DIRECTION IN IRAQ

(Mr. PALLONE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, for months now, President Bush has refused to listen to anyone outside of his war cabinet and for any counsel on the war in Iraq. Yesterday, the bipartisan Iraq Study Group came to the sobering conclusion that the situation in Iraq is grave and deteriorating.

We lost 10 soldiers in Iraq yesterday. We have lost more than 30 soldiers already this month. I had hoped that the President would begin to reconsider his course after the November election, but the President continues to say that American troops will remain in Iraq after he leaves office in 2 years. This is simply unacceptable. We must begin the process of redeploying our troops out of Iraq now.

The Iraqi Prime Minister was correct when he said that the war can only be won politically, and, therefore, it is time for us to bring our troops home. It is time for the politicians in Iraq to begin to work together to bring an end to the civil war and for the international community, particularly Iraq's neighbors, to work with Iraqi leaders to stabilize the Nation. Our troops have done everything they can, and it is now up to the Iraqis to take complete control of their country.

HONORING SPEAKER HASTERT

(Mr. DREIER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, 8 years ago this month this House was in a great crisis. We had had a Speaker of the House who chose to resign. The Republican Conference selected a new Speaker, he chose to resign, and we as Members came together and called on J. Dennis Hastert to become Speaker of the House of Representatives.

It was a difficult time. We were in the midst of considering articles of impeachment, and we continued to face many great challenges ahead. As we marked earlier this year, Dennis Hastert became, following that crisis 8 years ago this month, the longest-serving Republican Speaker in the history of the U.S. House of Representatives.

During that period of time, Mr. Speaker, we know that we have gone through some amazing changes and faced some real difficulties.

Today marks the 65th anniversary of the bombing of Pearl Harbor and one can't help but think about the attack on September 11, 2001. We have not had an attack on this soil, on our soil, in large part due to the leadership that Dennis Hastert has provided in ensuring that our homeland is secure. Today we got the report of a reduction in unemployment claims, and that number, a huge drop, is further indication of the strong and growing economy that is in

place because of the actions and the leadership of Dennis Hastert.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is important for us to note that while Denny Hastert is going to remain a Member of this House and provide advice and counsel to all of us, Democrats and Republicans alike, I think it is very, very appropriate as we look at the waning days of this 109th Congress to recognize his amazing and wonderful accomplishments on behalf of the American people and this institution.

WELCOMING THE FIRST LADY OF AZERBAIJAN

(Ms. SEKULA GIBBS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. SEKULA GIBBS. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I had the distinct pleasure of meeting the First Lady of Azerbaijan, Dr. Mehriban Aliyev, and several individuals of her Parliament who were traveling with her. They were received in the office of Senator KAY BAILEY HUTCHISON, who hosted a reception for the First Lady of Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijan is a growing democracy and one that has a strategic relationship with the United States, in that it shares troops with the United States and other countries in Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq, and they support the efforts to work combating global terrorism. They also help to play a key role in securing dependable energy supplies to countries, including the United States.

The Caspian Sea Republic of Azerbaijan is rapidly modernizing and developing its offshore energy sector, including gas pipelines, which have been very beneficial to its economic growth.

Here in the United States, I would add that my district in Houston, Sugar Land is particularly aware of the importance of developing new sources of energy and expanding our global reach for energy production for our country.

We also recognize that as an emerging democracy, Azerbaijan would like to be a member of NATO and EU and is a current member of the Council of Europe, which seeks to harmonize human rights and the goals of all humans.

Mr. Speaker, I would just like to say that the First Lady of Azerbaijan is also a physician, and we share the greater good. It was an honor to receive her as well as to welcome Melanne Vermeer and Vital Voices at that reception.

WAIVING REQUIREMENT OF CLAUSE 6(a) OF RULE XIII WITH RESPECT TO CONSIDERATION OF CERTAIN RESOLUTIONS AND PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF MOTIONS TO SUSPEND THE RULES

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 1096 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 1096

Resolved, That the requirement of clause 6(a) of rule XIII for a two-thirds vote to consider a report from the Committee on Rules on the same day it is presented to the House is waived with respect to any resolution reported on the legislative day of December 7, 2006.

SEC. 2. It shall be in order at any time on the legislative day of December 7, 2006, for the Speaker to entertain motions that the House suspend the rules. The Speaker or his designee shall consult with the Minority Leader or her designee on the designation of any matter for consideration pursuant to this resolution.

SEC. 3. House Resolutions 810, 939, 951, and 1047 are laid upon the table.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BOOZMAN). The gentlewoman from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

(Mrs. CAPITO asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 1096 waives clause 6(a) of rule XIII requiring a two-thirds vote to consider a rule on the same day it is reported from the Rules Committee against certain resolutions reported from the Rules Committee. The resolution applies the waiver to any special rule reported on this legislative day.

The rule also provides that suspensions will be in order at any time on this legislative day.

□ 1030

The resolution also provides that the Speaker or his designee shall consult with the minority leader or her designee on any suspension considered under this rule.

Mr. Speaker, this Congress has accomplished many things. We have worked on a variety of initiatives that will provide our working men and women with the resources necessary to succeed, expand access to health care, secure our borders, and continue to grow our economy. I would like to just comment on a few of these.

I am proud to say that I was part of the majority of Members that passed a raise in the Federal minimum wage for the first time in 9 years. It is important that we assist those who are struggling with the necessary tools to help them develop as individuals and in the workforce. I tell you that the hard-working men and women of West Virginia deserve this raise.

Another component of helping Americans succeed is making health care more affordable and accessible. This Congress has led the charge in modernizing our entitlement programs, allowing them to better serve the 21st-century senior.